

This letter is to give my personal and professional recommendation for the character of Anthony (Ant) Smith.

In my 7 years living and working in Philadelphia, I have seen this young man show up time and time again for the city's vulnerable populations. Every community meeting, every free food distribution, every community-led movement, Antjoins with his best self. He is kind, courageous, and caring. I have seen him selflessly help at events for Philadelphia's houseless, for our immigrant populations, for our trans populations, for our Black populations, and for the kids in the city.

A few years ago, I was walking down the street with Ant and I personally watched him attend to someone, who neither of us knew, who was slouched down and unresponsive. In that moment, Ant showed me the depth of his leadership skills as he constantly does. While I was stuck in shock and confusion, Ant checked this mans vitals, tried to speak with him to see if he was able to communicate, get information from those around him, and came up with a plan of action to get this man the medical attention he needed. I don't know if it's very often where you can say "I saw this person save someone's life", but that's exactly what I witnessed and is an attestation to Ant's character as a human being, a colleague, and as a Philadelphian that so many of us are proud of.

Please consider this to be my humble and most genuine understanding of Ant Smith. I hope this comes as proof to substantiate the claim that Ant belongs back in our community.

SOFIA GUERNICA

Anthony Smith Character Letter

Anthony Smith is an incredible human being. He projects empathy, kindness, and integrity. I sensed these qualities about him almost immediately when I first met him 10 years ago at Arcadia University. Because of his characteristics, I gravitated towards him and his greatness, something many people have done. Deep down I always knew that he would become a fighter for the rights of the underprivileged and minorities. I have known about the selfless actions he has done to improve his community in Philadelphia, and I have no doubt that he is a part of an important positive force. He stands for non-violence, progressive activism, and equality. Sometimes it is hard to believe that only one individual can be responsible for so much positive change, but the proven fact is that Anthony is among those people, and he is not the first person to be jailed for standing up for justice and what is right. I believe in Anthony's passionate commitment to his community and I believe in his integrity.

Sincerely,

Ibrahim Harris

Ashlee Hipp
2120 Susquehanna Road
Abington PA 19001
October 30, 2020

To The Presiding Judge,

My name is Ashlee Hipp, I am the Director of Specialized Services at YouthBuild Philly Charter School. I am writing to you on behalf of Anthony Smith, whom I have worked closely with over the past four years. I am often in conversation and spaces with Anthony at YouthBuild. He has been there for me in many ways over the years, anywhere from a mood boost when he knew I needed it to helping me de-escalate students in a nonviolent, loving way. When Ant is around, I know I'm okay and I know our students are okay. He has become the face of our school in so many ways.

Anthony started at YouthBuild as a Community Projects Coordinator, as his true passion is serving Black and Brown youth in city he was born in, loves, and respects, Philadelphia. He has organized countless service projects for those in the community to introduce the 220 young people we serve every year into their duty of service as AmeriCorps members. In addition to all of the service he creates, attends, and supports at YouthBuild, he does even more outside of YouthBuild. If it's a Friday, you can catch him at 60th and Market St, where he serves free food to the community with Foods not Bomb's Solidarity. If he's not serving at work, he's serving somewhere in his community.

Most recently, I saw him promoted at work to our social studies teacher. The moment I found this out, I was overjoyed as he is exactly the model we want for our young black and brown students- a Black man who knows his worth, knows his students' worth, and will fight peacefully to get equality and equity for all. He has flourished in his position, most importantly with the genuine relationships he has built with current and former students, inside and outside of the classroom. He is referred to as "Brother Ant" in our community, as everyone, both staff and students can count on him to show up and support us in times of need. He is truly the most selfless person I know, he will give you the shirt off his back without hesitation as long as it means you are good. He has a passion for making people protected, loved, and safe at all times.

Our students are hurting. The community is hurting. Anthony wants nothing more than equity and peace in this world and he dedicates his whole self to that statement every day of his life. I have never seen him lose his temper once. We've been in some tough situations together with students and he is always the calming force. He has nothing but love to give. He has very strong beliefs that all people should be created and treated equally but he doesn't have a mean, violent bone in his body. He is an exemplary young man who impacts the life of so many every day. I find it impossible to think that he could have been involved in any sort of crime, against anyone, that simply is not who Anthony is.

As a mother of two white sons, I could only hope that my boys grow up to be half the man Anthony is. It is my sincere hope that the court takes this letter into considerations at the time of sentencing. Despite the current case, I still believe Anthony Smith to be an honorable man, a valuable member to our school, our community, and our world.

Sincerely,
Ashlee Hipp

[Link to Ashlee Hipp's letter](#)

Robert Saleem Holbrook
Executive Director
Abolitionist Law Center
PO Box 31857
Philadelphia, PA 19104

November 3rd, 2020

Re: Anthony Smith

Dear Honorable Judge,

I am submitting this character letter in support of Anthony Smith who is presenting being held on charges filed by the United States District Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

I have known Anthony Smith since March, 2018 and have always found him to be a dedicated and caring educator for youth and an passionate community activist. I cannot wrap my head around the charges Anthony is facing but what I do know is that they are outside of his character and I do not believe Anthony is a flight risk or poses a threat to the public because he has the support of the community in Philadelphia behind him. In fact, Anthony's presence home while awaiting trial would actually benefit the youth who are in most need of support at this moment because Anthony would return to his passion of teaching disadvantaged youth within Philadelphia. For the reasons above I respectfully request that this honorable court grant Anthony bail or release on his own recognizance so that he may contribute to the community while he is awaiting trial.

Thank you for taking into consideration this letter.

Respectfully,

Robert Saleem Holbrook
Executive Director
Abolitionist Law Center
Tyriese James Holloway
3316 N 13th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19140

10/02/2020

Hello, my name is Alyssa B. King and I would like to submit a Letter of Support for the release and vindication of my dear friend Anthony David Alexander Smith. I have known Mr. Smith for over 10 years and I can say that in a nutshell Anthony is a responsible and intelligent individual with a passion for art, education and self-expression. Since the nutshell version of Anthony is lacking, I will provide more detail.

Upon first meeting Anthony our interactions were based in peer mentorship. Anthony and I attended the same University and were enrolled in the same 6 week summer bridge program. I was a mentee of the 2009 cohort and Anthony was a mentee of the 2010 cohort; I served as a peer mentor for the 2010 cohort. After a few weeks of conversation and various activities together it was clear that even just weeks out of high school Anthony was a honest and direct individual as he was clear in his communication about what he expected or did not expect from the summer bridge program and what he anticipated from his college experience. I also noticed his appreciation for authentic interactions and building community. Fast forward to 2014 this is when the dynamic of our friendship shifted from impersonal to personal. I can honestly say that to this day Anthony Smith is a responsible, reliable, consistent, honest, humble, authentic, community minded individual and this is exactly what we see in all aspects of his everyday life now in 2020.

Anthony Smith is a son, a brother, a friend, a teacher, and a community leader. In all aspects of his life he is consistently providing various levels of support and selflessness. As a son and brother, you can find Anthony providing financial support and caring for younger siblings. As a friend, he is not only a comedian, but he is someone you can rely on for advice. His level headedness and honesty provides a safe place to discuss and evaluate any situation. Anthony was also the first among my peers who supported and affirmed greatness within me. Greatness and confidence I had yet to find in myself. As a teacher Anthony is able to build a rapport with his students; encouraging them to find their own purpose and voice in life. He is always there and available for his students. In fact, they contact him if he misses a day of classes/programming, as he is rarely unavailable. As a community leader, Anthony empowers individuals to be socially engaged in their communities. He always provides a listening ear because he values everyone's life experiences. You can always find him at a neighborhood/garden clean up or serving food to community members. Anthony is also the recipient of the 2018 Mayor's award for Distinguished National Service.

To that end, Anthony Smith's family, friends, students and community need him home.

X Alyssa B. King
Alyssa B. King

Anna Latshaw
2653 East Thompson St
Philadelphia, PA 19125

10/30/2020

RE: Character Reference for Anthony Smith

Your Honor,

The aim of this letter is to present the good character of Anthony Smith. We have worked together for the past year and a half at YouthBuild Philly Charter School. In that time I have had the privilege of witnessing his diligent, considerate and resilient character as a mentor, educator and leader in our community. Which is why I felt compelled to write this letter when learning that Mr. Smith had been charged with arson and related acts of destruction. The charges against Mr. Smith would characterize him as reckless and destructive, despite the fact that I have witnessed first hand how he has dedicated his life and career to teaching the value of peace and thoughtfulness to the youth of our city.

Mr. Smith gives all of his time and energy to servicing and building up his community, whether that is our students and alumni at YouthBuild or his immediate neighbors. He works tirelessly to bring meaningful, relevant instruction that excites our students to be critically thinking learners. Students have recounted to me that in Mr. Smith's classes they talk about real things and he really wants to hear what they are thinking.

As an educator he is very gifted and works to develop the critical thinking skills of young adults so that they can make rational and clear decisions about what is important to them. As his colleague I have been the beneficiary of his ability to listen to people and also share his insight and wisdom without asking others to agree with him. In this way he builds bridges among staff and students by being a safe person with whom one can talk about difficult situations. His work at YouthBuild and his role in the community is a long term calling. He has been working to provide basic resources to his community and also advocating for justice for many years and knows that real change does not happen overnight. Just like he teaches in his classes Mr. Smith is a careful and measured person who is committed to fostering the wellbeing of all people. His work of advocacy and community support is not a flash in the pan, but a long term commitment that requires deliberate and careful choices to make sure his community is heard. He understands how high the stakes are and takes care to process the emotions he feels about the circumstances of today without putting them on others. He knows that his voice and leadership needs to remain steady, positive and full of hope, never destructive or violent.

I hope this letter will give you an idea of his exceptional character and calls into question the validity of the accusation made against him.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Sincerely,
Anna Latshaw

[Link to Anna Latshaw's letter](#)

Sarah C Madha
113 N 52nd St
Philadelphia, PA 19139

November 2, 2020

Re: Anthony Smith

Your Honor,

I met Anthony Smith shortly after I moved to Philadelphia in 2015. We were both fresh out of college at the time, still working a retail job and trying to figure out our next steps. Soon, we would first get a job at West Philadelphia High School through PromiseCorp, and subsequently at Youthbuild High School through another Americorps program.

During the two years I worked with him, Smith personified the mission of Americorps. I saw him dedicating himself to his west Philadelphia community, both during his "clocked" hours and after. He sought to humanize everyone around him, regardless of who they were and their background. Which is no small feat in a severely under-resourced neighborhood. He worked hard on figuring out how each individual interpreted the world around themselves, and then made education and service accessible to them through that understanding. Every single day, he showed up with his genuinely curious self despite working multiple jobs to support himself and his family. I have no doubt that it is this quality that in turn made him a great teacher at Youthbuild High School.

Smith is the humanitarian citizen we all strive to be. Even through the horrors of COVID- 19, he sought to place his communities' needs above his. He advocated for the houseless and the hungry, seeking to plug in resources where he could. He listened to people's pain, and sought to put a balm where he could.

I sincerely hope you consider letting Smith come home to his family and community.

Best,
Sarah C Madha

To Whom It May Concern,

For the short time that I've known Anthony Smith or Mr. Ant as we lovingly call him, he has been nothing but an outstanding human being and an inspiration to those who have had the pleasure to meet or know him, including his students at YB, who speak his praises anytime they can. Just this week, students shared with me their appreciation for Mr. Ant's commitment to teach and encourage them through their hardships and doubts. He makes students smile, participate, turn on their cameras, think deeply, engage thoughtfully with one another not only in person but on zoom (which is practically impossible given the state of education today). Students look up to Mr. Ant and seek out his mentorship and glean from his nurturing way of doing and being. He reminds students who come from all over the city of Philadelphia of their power as positive change-makers.

Ant stands by his students, he stands for what is right, and he stands strong as a leader in every space he walks in whether volunteering his time to build up his beloved city of Philadelphia or just by offering his talents as an orator towards causes for which he believes-- he most recently volunteered to be interviewed for my podcast, Education As Liberation, to talk about the issues facing youth in schools, and to dream up ways to nurture possibilities for students to feel liberated on their educational journey.

Mr. Ant is an advocate and a champion for good. He is intelligent, kind and dedicated. I have learned much from him from our conversations, and his passion for teaching and uplifting his community is beyond measure, a strength that reminds me of the great Black leaders throughout history who have done the same as him teach, lead by example and exude love and solidarity for what is right, what is humane.

When I first started at YouthBuild, Ant helped to orient me to the culture here, he gave of his time and wisdom without hesitation. We have friends in common who can also speak to his great character and spirit. I am thankful to be in a world where a man like him exists. I stand in solidarity with Mr. Ant, and all the good he is and brings to our city, to our youth, to our plight for peaceful liberation and eternal justice.

In Peace,

Ah-Keisha McCants, M.S.Ed
Language Arts Teacher

11/1/2020

I have known Anthony Smith for eleven years and he is a good friend. I can vouch for him, and say that he has been a person of morals and integrity over the time we have know each

03,

I can further state that Anthony is extremely dedicated to his family and work, and a loving person towards friends too. My sister and Anthony worked together previously and I can proudly say that he is respectful towards others and also gets along well with his co-workers. He has great work ethics and is a hard worker.

I can confirm that in all the time I have know him, Anthony Smith has been a reliable, trustworthy and decent person. I just hope that you will give an oppertunity for a second chance to Anthony while you make a fair

Yours Sincerely,

Shin A. Mann

4725 Chester Ave.
Philadelphia , PA
October 31 , 2020

Your Honor:

I write this letter to attest to Anthony Smiths' honest and loyal character. I am a member of Food Not Bombs Solidarity-an all-volunteer group dedicated to serving the people of our community. Anthony Smith is a member as well, and I can attest to his hard work and willingness to help those in need.

When the Covid virus first hit back in March, we knew that we had to do something. Without hesitation, Anthony helped us as we made hand sanitizer and cleaning products that were packed into bags with food and distributed - for free- to the people of the community. This was a very fearfilled time, just going outside was thought to be risky...but Anthony did not hesitate and spent hours assembling and packing those bags-then traveling to distribute them. Since that time, (and before) Anthony has been with us as a loyal and hard-working member. We still distribute care bags of masks, food and personal products every week, and Anthony is one of the best volunteer workers, who can easily speak to, and connect with those that we meet.

Of course as a much-loved part of this community, Anthony has an incredible amount of support and caring directed to him. I have known him for years, and he is always eager to take part in anything that would benefit others.

What is important to know as well, is Anthonys' deep respect for his elders. I am 67, so I can attest to this. He is very aware of how to listen to, and take direction from those older than him. This characteristic is pretty rare lately, and it points to the fact that in my opinion, Anthony is NOT a flight risk.

Please release him, he is missed.

Cynthia Miller

Shannon Rose Moriarty
39 Raleigh Road
Kendall Park, New Jersey 08824
(732) 586-5796

November 2, 2020

RE: Anthony Smith

Your Honor,

It is my pleasure to be writing to you on behalf of Anthony "Ant" Smith who I am proud to say is a well loved person in my life. Since 2014, when we first met to now, our relationship has grown from being student artists to close friends. Ant is one of the people that I trust unconditionally. He is the most intentional, selfless person I have ever met. He humbly serves his community and looks at every opportunity through the lens of a justice serving advocate. He knows that as a community we have the responsibility to support and empower each other because we are stronger together.

Ant and I both attended Arcadia University where we were both enrolled in Art & Design courses. I saw Ant's artwork before I knew him. Ant's artwork is powerful; it's strong, heartfelt and moving. I was changed because I felt and saw the passion and hardwork that he poured into his visual stories. His artwork pushed me to recognize my own power as an artist. I first met Ant at his BFA Thesis Exhibition in 2014 and then it all made sense; Ant cares. Ant puts in the time to do the right thing and to do it well; in everything that he does. Ant is an inspiration.

In 2016, when Ant accepted an AmeriCorps position serving at YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School our friendship grew. As an organization, YouthBuild prides themselves on building community and fostering growth in both their students and their staff. The culture is strong and both students and staff thrive there. Ant does more than thrive as a member of the YB community; he is a Leader within the YB community. Although I have never had the privilege of working at YouthBuild I interact with everyone daily because I serve as the Arts & Humanities Teacher at OIC Workforce Academy which is located in the same building.

Over the past 4 years I have seen how Ant connects with the YB community. With every interaction, he is genuine, meeting every person with endless kindness and compassion. Ant is authentic and builds relationships that celebrate mutual respect. In every conversation Ant gives his all; Ant cares. He is present and treats all people with the respect that they deserve. In moments of adversity, Ant speaks truth to power and motivates others to recognize their potential. With every opportunity he proves that out of disagreements and differences, honest communication and evidence based in fact is how real change occurs.

Ant recognizes his impact and he knows that he is a role model to the students he serves, a mentor to those he works alongside as well as a trustworthy leader for his community. His impact is felt by all he comes across and he would not put himself in harm's way. He knows that as a community we have the responsibility to support and empower each other because we are stronger together. He would not risk letting down his community. There have been few details that have been released surrounding Ant's arrest. From what I have read the allegations do not align to either Ant's mentality or temperament. I am certain that the case presented against Ant Smith will cause suspicion and I urge you to follow that doubt and release him back to his community.

Yours Sincerely,

Shannon Rose Moriarty

To whom it may concern

When I was younger, my brother Anthony Smith was my caregiver while our mother worked. In the time spent with my brother, I learned that he is very respectful and patient. He was my protector, and he always advised me to do the right thing. He taught me to help people in need and treat people with respect. Growing up, my brother made sure that if my mother or myself needed help in any way, he would make time for us, no matter if he lost out on something he wanted to do. My brother would never damage property that does not belong to him. I know because he always cherished his own property and valued others; it goes back to the way our mother raised us. My brother was never one for arguments, if he found himself in the middle of one he would remain calm and listen to what the other person has to say. Anthony was never violent, and he's never been in a fight. Anthony is one of the best role models I could ask for, he cares for everyone he meets, he cares for his family and his community. He is respectful, honorable, and responsible.

I love my brother.

Sincerely,

Ebony Motley

APALAC Philadelphia Chapter

734-796-6246 Call or Text

Facebook @apalaphilly

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN LABOR ALLIANCE, AFL-CIO

Letter for Anthony Smith

11.2.2020

I met Ant through friends of mine back in 2017 and have known him for several years now. I have always been amazed by Ant's energy, compassion, and dedication. He has worked to serve his community in a multitude of ways. As a teacher he guides and mentors youth. For years, he has selflessly spent his free time serving his community with Food Not Bombs, providing aid for those who need it the most.

Throughout COVID-19, Ant was out in Malcolm X Park giving out food, water, and sanitizing supplies to me and my neighbors. Food Not Bombs has always been incredibly important to the West Philly community; but the early days of COVID, when grocery store shortages made it very difficult for people to access food and cleaning supplies, it became essential for survival. Despite working full-time he is a constant presence at community events, where Ant consistently shows up and supports people with love and humor during dark times.

Ant (Anthony) Smith does important and amazing work. He is a teacher and a leader who works tirelessly to nurture and serve Philadelphia's communities of color. He has built relationships all over this city. Philadelphia needs more people like Ant and his community needs him back. We need Ant to be released.

Best,

Jeeva Muhil, - signing on behalf of the Philadelphia Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance

ARCADIA UNIVERSITY

SINCÆIASJ

Nov. 2, 2020

Your Honor,

I am writing in support of the character of Mr. Anthony D. A. Smith. Anthony was my student at Arcadia, in English 102, several years ago. I remember him clearly, as he was an extraordinary student and person who made a deep impression on me. He was conscientious about his work and set high standards for himself. But what set him apart from most other students I have taught was the quality of his thinking. He was so intrigued with ideas that came up in class discussion that he often stayed after to continue talking with me about them long after the other students had left. Patient and exacting, he was intent on following each line of thought to its logical end in order to accurately weigh its faults and advantages. At the same time, he was always quick to laugh and never took himself too seriously. The Anthony I knew was a gentle soul who loved music and language, who joked with his classmates, who wrestled with big ideas. I saw no trace of a violent temperament in him, and would not believe him capable of the charges now filed against him. Since he graduated from Arcadia, I have followed Anthony's path into civic leadership and communityservice activities in the local news, and was gratified to hear he'd become a high school teacher. Everything I've heard about him makes me proud to have been part of his education, and I expect many more good things from him. To those with power over Anthony's fate right now, I entreat you to send this gifted leader and helper back to his West Philadelphia community; they need him. Philadelphia needs

Sincerely,

Ellen Murphey
Graduate & Undergraduate Studies
Arcadia University

TEL: 215.572.2900 WWW.ARCADIA.EDU / 450 S. Easton Road, Glenside, PA 19038-3295
A DISTINCTIVELY GLOBAL, INTEGRATIVE, PERSONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

When I first met Ant, I was impressed with his articulate, intelligent, and compassionate spirit. I thought, this is my people. As I got to know him, I found this to be exactly right. He is serious in a congenial way — serious in that he is focused and consistent about the things he holds dear, congenial in that he is always human, always compassionate. His nature is welcoming, and his presence is comforting. Earlier this year I was quarantined alone in Cali, Colombia. Within a couple of weeks, I rescued a puppy of about 4 months, sick and starving on the streets. I nurtured her to great health so that she could get her shots, which aren't administered during sickness. It was too late, as she had already caught distemper. I brought her home to the states before I knew, and Ant got a chance to meet her. When after weeks of efforts to save her life I had to choose to put her down, it was Ant's words of compassion that helped me to have the release I needed to move on.

There were times when I felt where I had to sleep was unsafe, and Ant came and stayed, sleeping on the ground until I felt secure. There was a period of time when I knew he needed care because of all the giving he does — we all need our cups refilled. I tried to get him to come to my place and get some food and care rather than just when I needed it, and he wanted to but didn't because his best friend had lost her mother and he insisted on being there with her every chance he had. He has demonstrated the same commitment to his students. Always eager to engage them and brag about how powerful and capable they are. I'm sure this faith in them, students who have not been successful in the standard school environment, is why they enjoy his guidance so much.

Ant is a bright light in our community and in my life, and I so look forward to the moment when this confusion is resolved, and he returns to shine among us.

Peace,

YahNé Ndgo <yahnendgo@gmail.com>

To whom it may concern,

I have known Anthony Smith as a peer and colleague for almost 3 years. Ant alongside another Americorps member interviewed me for the position at Youthbuild as a Community Projects Coordinator which has played a pivotal role in my own development.

Anthony exudes an exuberance and passion felt by anyone who comes in his presence. An intentionality that inspires people to think critically about the world around them. An innate desire to make sure that people get and have what they need. He not only inspires people to want better for themselves but also their community. He challenges his students to examine social injustices and tangible ways to begin to resolve these issues.

During our Village Meetings at the school which are essentially community gatherings to check in with students and staff, Ant is always the last to sit down as we greet students, making sure every student is greeted with love and respect before they go about their day.

There are no amount of words to succinctly articulate how much Anthony Smith means to our community, to our students, to our staff. It is my sincere hope that the court take this letter into consideration. Despite the current case, the Philly community is a better place thanks to Ant's voice and commitment to equity, justice, advocacy, and simply knowing what is right.

Sincerely,

Jasmine Newton

[Link to Jasmine Newton's letter](#)

Thursday, October 29, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

I am proudly and without any hesitation writing this letter in total support of my friend and colleague in community organizing, Ant Smith.

I first met him five years ago when I moved here from Washington, DC. He and his other friends welcomed me warmly to this city and the local activist community. He has always been very warm, friendly, funny, patient and generous in sharing ideas and information. He is a joy to be around.

His arrest on Wednesday by federal authorities facing very serious charges is a travesty and clearly shows there are those that do not know the man that he is. I have worked with him on various projects and I have found him to consistently be the best prepared, the most patient, the most disciplined and thus, the least likely to engage in any violence or damage to property. He is known to have the best skills in de-escalation and I have witnessed this first hand. Thus, I hope these charges are not in retaliation for his participation in past non-violent protests with no damage to property.

He is also a great teacher, loved and well respected by his students; he talks fondly of them often. He is also well known to accept, embrace and respect his students as they are, encouraging, protecting and advocating for those that may face bullying because they are LGBTQIA. Teachers like him are what we need, now more than ever.

Ant Smith means so much to his family and wider community where he is greatly loved and respected. I urge those with the power to do so to release him back to his family and community as soon as possible.

Sincerely, For Justice, For All,

Asantewaa Nkrumah-Ture
West Philadelphia resident

To whom it may concern,

My name is Melanie Osborn, and I am currently a student at Youthbuild Philadelphia Charter School. Throughout my last two months at this school, my life has completely changed. Coming in, I was a shy and secluded person, and now I know how to use my voice. Anthony Smith is the reason why. In our Introduction to Advocacy class, Mr. Ant has gone above and beyond in showing us how to PROPERLY and PEACEFULLY advocate for ourselves. For the last two months, he's gone out of his way to make sure we understand how important it is to stand up for what you believe in, in the RIGHT WAY! While in class, Mr. Ant brings the best, most positive energy I've seen in anybody. He makes you feel comfortable, like our class is a family. He has done nothing but try to help people and make sure justice is served. I've seen many people fall victim to the system, but this is the LAST person who deserves something like this. Anthony Smith is a kind, genuine, caring person and I STAND WITH HIM!

Melanie Osborn - Business Administration Scholar Class of 2021

November 1, 2020

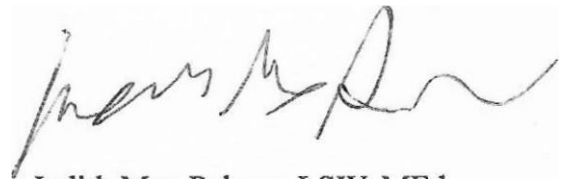
To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing on behalf of Anthony Smith. Ant is a neighbor, a friend, and a fellow community activist. We have worked on campaigns together and I have always respected his energy, insight, and dedication. I had just spoken with him a few days before he was taken into custody.

Please send Ant home. His family, friends, students, and neighbors need him. He is a valued member of our community and in no way a threat. We know him, and to continue to hold him does nothing but undermine the credibility of the justice system.

I look forward to welcoming my brother home.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Judith Max Palmer", written in a cursive style.

Judith Max Palmer, LSW, MEd

MR. ANT

He is my teacher/mentor also he is a son, friend, leader, brother, teacher to so many others. He is such a great person! He is happy, caring, he is always smiling and always has excellent energy no matter what he's going through. He is so brave to take on leadership for our black community not many are willing to do that for us. He was never for violence BUT he's for justice! He was never the type to lose his cool when speaking on what he cared for no matter who was coming at him in a disrespectful way, he always was cool and calm! He is a strong powerful black man with a wonderful voice. The warmth and joy Mr. Ant brings to any space he's in is incredible.

From, Najia Patterson

Betsey Piette
152 Glencoe Rd
Upper Darby, PA 19082

HONORABLE HENRY S. PERKIN
United States Magistrate Judge Suite
4401 Edward N. Cahn U.S. Courthouse and Federal
Building
504 Hamilton Street
Allentown, Pennsylvania 18101

Dear Mr. Perkin,

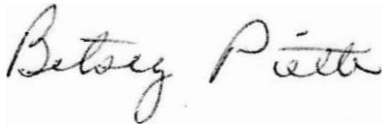
As an elder activist in Philadelphia's progressive social justice movement it has been my privilege to get to know and work with Anthony Smith over the past five years. Anthony has always shown tremendous respect for elders in the movement, while working to build bridges between us and his generation of youth.

He is a member of the community who is there when the community needs him. I have witnessed his patient interaction with young people, and it is easy to understand why he is beloved by his students.

Those of us who know, and love Anthony know in our hearts that the state's charges against him are totally without merit. He should be released and allowed to return to his family and community.

Further restraining Mr. Smith would result in considerable harm to those who rely on him including family, friends: and most of all his students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betsey Piette". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with a large initial 'B' and a distinct 'P'.

Betsey Piette

Philadelphia International Action Center

Nov. 1, 2020

To whom it may concern

It was extremely surprising to hear about the arrest of Anthony Smith on October 28th. The charges he is accused of seem so out of character.

I've known Anthony since 2015, when I met him at events calling for more funding for schools. I was impressed by his abilities to explain clearly and in everyday terms the necessity of not only adequate funds for education but also an improved curriculum that would reflect the needs of the majority of this city's students who are Black, Latinx, Asian or Indigenous. His intelligence is evident whenever he speaks.

As a photographer, I've seen and heard him many times over the last five years at events advocating for social justice. He consistently acted and spoke in a reasonable manner, always explaining the factors involved in a particular issue and, in common language, raising what the solution might best include.

In short, he's not a person who would take rash actions. He's also someone who everyone loves. His quick smile, his dress and demeanor are inviting. But his most endearing quality is his ability to listen. It's easy to talk to him and you know he'll respond after honestly considering what you've said.

I most often see him surrounded by people who obviously respect him, most often by peers of his own generation but also by students and young adults. He is a natural leader.

It would be a mistake to imprison such a widely respected and admired young man and teacher. At a time of crisis, when young people need leaders that come from their own communities capable of understanding and solving the complex problems that face our society, all the charges against Anthony Smith should be dropped and he should be freed.

He is not a flight risk since he has a large community of friends and family supporting him. I wholeheartedly believe he should be released back to his friends and loved ones.

Joseph Piette

152 Glencoe Rd

Upper Darby

610-931-2615

Vietnam War veteran

Retired postal worker and member of NALC Br 157)

Photographer

November 2, 2020

To whom it may concern,

I would like to speak to the character of Anthony Smith, who I know as "Ant." I know Ant through our mutual friends, and he is one of those people who immediately leaves an impression on you. Ant is a thoughtful, creative and dedicated educator in our schools. His passion for teaching is evident in everything he does. He is well loved and admired by so many people here in Philadelphia. I personally look up to Ant for his intelligence, his natural leadership, and the kindness he shows to everyone around him. As a lifelong Philadelphian and an essential healthcare worker, I consider Ant an indispensable asset to our community. He is also a person of great integrity and honesty.

Thank you for taking my letter into consideration.

Sincerely,

Samantha Pinto, B.A. Temple University

Patient Services Coordinator

Penn Medicine Health System

Philadelphia, PA

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Jennifer Rivers and I am writing to support the release and exoneration of Anthony Smith. I have had the privilege of working with Anthony since 2017 at YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School. When we first met, he was serving in his second year as an AmeriCorps member with our Student Life department.

Anthony is one of the most passionate individuals that I have come to know. He is a kind, caring, empathetic leader who has committed his life to serving others. I am often amazed at how he manages to juggle teaching, mentoring young people, serving his community, particularly in these tumultuous times, while still being very present for his family. Anthony loves people and wants to make sure that everyone, particularly those that he holds near and dear to him are good. There has never been a time when I have encountered Anthony in the hallway, and he just walked by without inquiring as to how I'm feeling, doing, or managing. He is thoughtful in the ways that he makes space for those that he engages with to be heard, feel valued and appreciated.

It has truly been a privilege to get to know Anthony and learn from him. His approach to building relationships with young people, engaging them in the classroom and helping them to make meaningful connections to the curriculum and the responsibility that they have to be change agents in the community is powerful. He personifies what it means to be a critically conscious leader and his daily example is a reminder of the responsibility that I have as an educator to meet young people where they are, equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to make good decisions, and challenge them to find ways to be of service to others.

It is my sincere hope that this letter is helpful in getting Anthony released from federal custody. He deserves to be home with his family and back in the classroom with his students.

Kind Regards,

Jennifer C. Rivers, Ed.M.

Associate Director of College and Career Readiness

YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School

1231 N. Broad street, 3rd Floor

Philadelphia, PA 19122

Francis Rocchi
2621 Folsom Street
Philadelphia, PA 19130
October 29, 2020

RE: Mr. Anthony Smith (Character Letter)

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of Anthony Smith, my colleague and friend at Youthbuild Philadelphia Charter School. I have worked with Mr. Smith closely over the last year of my employment at Youthbuild, and I have tremendous respect for him as a person of personal integrity, conviction, decency, and compassion. The news of the charges brought against him was a shock to me personally and reverberated through our school community.

While my time knowing Mr. Smith has been admittedly short, our collaboration has been intense and purposeful as we worked towards creating a class that can most effectively empower our students to create positive and peaceful reform in their communities. In the preceding six months when the temperature of our social climate has risen to a fever pitch I have seen students reach out to Mr. Smith with anger and fear over the state of their country and communities; in each and every one of those instances I have witnessed Mr. Smith help our students find productive and peaceful ways to affect change and speak truth to power. He has been a radiating calm in turbulent times, and both a model and resource for me when I seek opportunities to practice what I preach and advocate for a more just Philadelphia.

It is my sincere hope that Mr. Smith is treated with the fairness, dignity, and respect that he has treated me, his peers, and all his students with. His strength of character is demonstrated in his history of fighting for true justice, and his actions speak more eloquently to the kind of person he is than I could ever hope to. He is needed in our school and in our community.

Sincerely,

Francis Rocchi
Literacy Specialist
Youthbuild Philadelphia



Christopher R.
Rogers 501 S. 52nd St.
Philadelphia, PA
19139

oar	s d tuni	r
(484) 437-8142		

To Whom It May Concern:

I write this letter on behalf of Anthony Smith to attest to the long, in-depth relationship upon which he shares with the Philadelphia Student Union and on behalf of the committed work he has done to transform education within the city of Philadelphia. Our staff and student members have noted that Anthony has used his platform to uplift calls by young people for our schools to invest in holistic youth-led solutions to foster safe and sustainable schools and communities, such as the critical importance of counselors, nurses, and librarians. Anthony has consistently advocated for children in our communities to have access to the tools and resources they need to thrive.

While Ant has almost always been visible within our community for standing up and speaking out against injustice, I first had an in-depth conversation with Ant as he worked as an award-winning AmeriCorps volunteer at YouthBuild Charter School. He mentored young people, notwithstanding their numerous challenges, to think about the visionary futures that are made possible from their studies. He spoke to the immersive potential of learning that reached beyond the bells and walls of the school building to recognize that community spaces can be expansive sites for interpretation, investigation, and innovation for collective progress. As he matured into a role as a Social Studies educator, we took serious time in imagining lessons that integrated and archived community histories to have students understand their own role, responsibility, and commitment to facilitating positive change. He understood and represented with his actions that the purpose of education was not so that students may escape their neighborhoods, but to lead their communities toward a brighter tomorrow. He's a model educator, grounded in love, compassion, and humanity. Many have already, and will continue to learn from his experiences and wisdom.

At the Philadelphia Student Union, we stand with Anthony Smith, maintain his complete Innocence, and advocate toward his immediate and swift release so that he may return to the purpose-driven work of being an unparalleled educator and youth advocate within our schools and communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CR Rogers', is positioned above the typed name.

Christopher R. Rogers

Board Chair, Philadelphia Student Union

Cell: (484) 437-8142

board@phillystudentunion.org

October 29th, 2020

To whom it may concern,

My name is Hector Roman, and I am an educator at Youthbuild Philadelphia Charter school. I teach financial literacy, but more importantly, I teach students to become better citizens and active members of their communities. We, as a school, teach our students to speak out against injustice whether it be at home or in the streets. We do our best to provide them with the tools and means necessary to elevate their voices to the mountaintops, and there was no one at our school who gave more than Anthony Smith.

Though it is true that I have known him for just a short time, it was immediately clear that the message Anthony speaks to students was a message of civic duty, of racial equity, and of the power of the people to rise above their circumstance as a united group. Whether it be in his classroom, in his newly virtual learning space, or in one-on-one conversations with students and staff, Anthony gives every part of himself to this work.

As educators, our role in bringing our students up is often oversimplified. There are those who would look at us as deliverers of content and nothing more. Some would see us as testers of children, or gatekeepers for where our students go next. None of these demonstrate the true capacity of our work.

Anthony is an unmatched exemplar of how much more educators do for students. He would give up any part of his time to be there to support students in any capacity. The most important thing is that students know this. Ask them. See them express their concern for an individual who has brought them nothing but kindness, complete empathy, and the building blocks for a better and more positive future. His value in our community cannot be overstated. Where so many have forgotten our students, their plights, and their voice, Anthony seeks to remind us that they are here, and they have the ability to speak for themselves.

All we have to do is listen. Listen, and our students will speak to the righteousness of his character. There are no voices who matter more.

With gratitude and humility,

Hector Roman

Educator for Youthbuild Philadelphia Charter School

To Whom It May Concern,

The purpose of this letter is to express support for Mr. Anthony Smith, a person of exceptional moral character. I met Anthony in 2017 when he began his first year as an AmeriCorps member at YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School in North Philadelphia. At YouthBuild, Anthony served as a Community Projects Coordinator before being hired full-time as a social studies teacher. At the time, I was a Vocation Instructor as well as a facilitator of the after-school writing club.

Anthony co-facilitated the writing club alongside me. Anthony and I worked together at YouthBuild for nearly three years and traveled, with students, to Puerto Rico together after Hurricane Maria to provide hurricane relief to the island.

Although I have only known Anthony for a few years, I can confidently and unequivocally state that Anthony is a steadfast, intelligent, and trustworthy member of the larger Philadelphia community. He treats all residents with respect, and his integrity is unflinching. At YouthBuild and in his other endeavors, Anthony has been a mentor, role model, and friend to hundreds of youth in our city. In his personal interactions, he is gentle, kind, generous, and compassionate.

Anthony's students are eagerly awaiting his return to their classroom. He is a thoughtful and effective educator who should not be taken from his role in the classroom for any amount of time. I express my concern for his absence from the classroom and hope for his immediate release.

Jennifer Schifano
Professor of English
Esperanza College of Eastern University
Madeline Seton
5231 Ridge Ave
Philadelphia, PA 19128

November 2, 2020

RE: Anthony Smith

Your Honor,

I am a former classmate and colleague of Anthony "Ant" Smith. We spent four years together at Arcadia University from 2010—2014, pursuing a major in graphic design. I had every graphic design course throughout those four years with Ant as well as a few other courses outside our major as well. I spent lots of time with Ant in our graphic design computer studio outside of class, where he worked as a lab monitor, assisting students with the programs and complex printer systems. He was happy to help or answer any question myself or the other students had, whether on design or in general. It is no surprise that he ended up in his career path as a social studies teacher— he is a natural leader and mentor, selflessly giving of his time and eager to share knowledge.

Ant is by-far one of the most charismatic and friendly people I can say I am blessed to have crossed paths with during my lifetime. Although Ant and I were not close friends, he always greeted me enthusiastically exclaiming, "Oh snap! Maddyyyyyyyyyyyy!" and was usually accompanied by a high-five and a hug, without fail, every time we saw each other on campus. His natural peaceful demeanor and warmth could turn my mood around, even on the days when I was feeling most stressed out or upset.

During our many hours spent together outside of class in the computer lab, Ant was the cheerleader of the group, encouraging us to keep working when we were tired and frustrated, telling us we were doing great, all while cracking jokes and laughing alongside us. It is for that reason I feel compelled to take my turn as being a cheerleader for Ant and to urge you to please make a fair decision on this case.

Sincerely,
Madeline Seton

ERICA GADSBY SMITH

1 25 SAMUEL ST FEASTERVILLE, PA 19053 215-932-4378 • ERICAGADSBYSMITH@GMAIL.COM

To WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

MY NAME IS ERICA GADSBY SMITH AND I AM WRITING THIS LETTER ON BEHALF OF ANTHONY

SMITH. ANTHONY SMITH IS A COLLEAGUE OF MINE AT YOUTHBUILD PHILLY CHARTER SCHOOL AND IS AN INVALUABLE MEMBER OF THE YOUTHBUILD COMMUNITY AND A POWERFUL RESOURCE FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE THAT ARE MEMBERS OF THAT COMMUNITY. ANTHONY OR MR. ANT GIVES HIS TIME AND ENERGY TO SUPPORT THE EDUCATION OF THOSE YOUNG MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY. HE PROVIDES TIME AND ENERGY TO A CLASSROOM FULL OF STUDENTS ADDITIONALLY THOUGH MR. ANT IS THERE FOR EACH ONE OF HIS STUDENTS ON AN INDIVIDUAL LEVEL, HIS DEDICATION TO THEIR SUCCESS IS EQUAL TO THEIR OWN. LIKEWISE FOR ME PERSONALLY ANTHONY HAS BEEN VERY SUPPORTIVE, AS A NEW PROFESSIONAL IN THE FIELD; I RECENTLY GRADUATED WITH MY BACHELORS DEGREE AFTER YEARS AS A STAY AT HOME MOM OF MY THREE CHILDREN. ANTHONY PROVIDED PROFESSIONAL GUIDANCE WHENEVER I ASKED HIM. ACTUALLY ANTHONY'S SUPPORT AS A COLLEAGUE IS UNIVERSALLY FELT IT IS OFFERED AUTOMATICALLY AND APPEARING EFFORTLESSLY. HIS SUPPORT HELPED ME GAIN CONFIDENCE AS I CONTINUE TO DEVELOP MY PROFESSIONAL SKILLS. ANOTHY IS A HUGE PART OF YOUTHBUILD AND WHAT MAKES IT A GREAT PLACE AND A WONDERFUL COMMUNITY, HE IS THE KIND OF PERSON THAT MAKES HIS WORKPLACE AND HIS WORLD A BETTER ONE. I PRAY FOR HIS QUICK RETURN TO WHERE HE BELONGS.

[LINK TO ERIKA SMITH'S LETTER](#)

To Whom It May Concern-

I am writing to you today in regards to my former co-worker, Anthony Smith. Prior to August, 2020, Anthony and I worked together at YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School, where he first served as an AmeriCorps Member and later our Social Studies teacher. I am writing this letter on his behalf to state unequivocally that Anthony was and is one of the most caring, loving, and hardworking people I have ever met and had the opportunity to work alongside.

A visit to Anthony's classroom at any point during the day will show you highly engaged students who know that they are respected, valued and cared for. He is an educator who defined going above and beyond in his work for students and his coworkers- consistently attending school trips, student events, and community service projects, where he served alongside students even as his role transitioned into that of a full-time teacher.

I am sure that many students will also be writing letters on Anthony's behalf, so I will not attempt to speak for them here. One thing I wish to highlight, however, is Anthony's incredible skill in building and maintaining the health and strength of communities he is a part of. I have personally watched Anthony successfully work to restore relationships between students as well as fellow staff members. I have seen him build relationships with the most disengaged students, eventually inspiring them to reach a fuller and more vibrant version of themselves. Most of all, I have experienced the incredible positive energy Anthony brings into our community on even the hardest days. This is simply what Anthony is about. That is what he does. And he brings this energy into every space he enters, filling it with the care and love that people so often need.

I do not know the specifics of the case at hand, and so will not comment on it here. What I will say is that Anthony is a pillar in our community and the community of Philadelphia as a whole. I truthfully cannot think of anyone who supports students and coworkers more deeply than him. He is everything we speak about young people needing in their lives, and I look forward to the day he can return to his classroom and his community as a whole. I hope that day comes as soon as possible.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Francis Strickler
Facilitator, Educator, and Program Director

[Link to Francis Strickland's letter](#)

11/03/2020

RE: Anthony Smith

Your Honor,

My name is Victoria Van Sant. I was born in Rahway, NJ, went to college at Arcadia University outside of Philadelphia, and now live in Boston, where I work as a Product/UX Designer. I have been lucky enough to know Anthony Smith since 2013, having met at Arcadia University where we both studied Art & Design. We all just call him Ant.

My friendship with Ant has been defined by his energy and compassion. If there is one thing he was known for, it was his personability and intelligence. Ant has an admirable way of being actively kind. When you have a conversation with him, you can tell he's actually listening. Ant cares. This wasn't a small thing, nor is it just the sort of general uprightness of character that we all want to ascribe to our friends. It was the defining center of his personality. And that defining center can be seen today with both his involvement with the education system as a Social Studies teacher and his commitment to black rights and equality as one of the lead organizers for Philadelphia Coalition for Racial Economic and Legal (REAL) Justice.

Ant cares deeply about his community. While in college, there were a lot of long days in the Mac Lab (computer room for the digital designers), and Ant was always happy to be there for his classmates, whether that be to help with a printer problem, offer advice on a project, or provide comforting words to those stressing over an upcoming deadline. Ant is just an incredibly kind person, and anyone who knows him also knows that he hasn't been causing unrest or encouraging law-breaking—he's been helping to coordinate peaceful protests and to bring people together. That's what he's always been committed to.

In hopes of a just resolution,
Victoria Van Sant

Concern,

October 29, 2020

To Whom It May

I am writing to show my support for my friend and former colleague, Anthony Smith. I got to know Ant when we met as staff members at YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School, and I have known him for a little over four years. For the entire time we were colleagues, he was a thoughtful, engaged, supportive member of the team. He is a caring and compassionate man, which also makes him a phenomenal teacher. He started off at YouthBuild as a Community Projects Coordinator, which was a role focused on creating community service experiences for students. He took to the role immediately, designing projects and serving alongside students. After working in that role for a couple of years, he recognized the impact he wanted to make as a teacher, received his certification, and began teaching social studies. He is excellent at building relationships, and brought an ethic of service as well as passionate energy to his work with students and staff alike. It's what makes him a great educator, and hundreds of current YouthBuild students and recent alumni over the years would identify "Mr. Ant" as their favorite teacher with no hesitation.

Although I no longer work at YouthBuild, I have remained connected to Ant and his work as an activist. He is always using his voice and his platform to advocate for justice for all people. It didn't matter if he identified as a member of a particular community or not—his personal vision of justice was applied to all people and he made no bones about that. Throughout multiple instances of racial injustice as well as educational news stories like issues around mandated metal detectors in high schools, school facilities concerns around asbestos and lead, and so many other issues facing Philadelphia's youth, Ant used any platform he had to speak out, take a stand on issues, call out apathy with love, and propose a broader vision for true justice for all. He is the best among us.

I have no doubt letters of support for Ant will come pouring in over the coming days and weeks. That is a true testament to Ant's impact on his community; he saw everyone around him, and certainly the most marginalized among us, as his community, and he lives every day of his life to fight for us all. Please consider this letter and the others you receive speaking to his character and drop all charges against him.

With regards,

Stephanie

Stephanie Waller

Concern,
Assistant Director for Strategy and Operations
School District of Philadelphia Charter Schools Office

Concern,
To whom it may Concern,

I would like to express my deep concerns for one of the best men I know Mr. Anthony Smith. I don't have all the details surrounding his case but I can assure you that Mr. Ant is an outstanding citizen and a wonderful leader in the black community. With everything going on in the world today I am actually scared for his safety and wellbeing. Mr. Ant has taught me so much about standing up for what I believe in. Speaking up about all the wrong and injustice that has been going on for years. And actually taking a stand and making our voices heard. As we have all heard about the injustice and police brutality that occurred in West Philadelphia this past week It is appalling as to how the government as well as the rest of the world can not see why we are tired. Why we have run out of tears and why we are taking the biggest stand this generation has seen. If it wasn't for Mr. Ant I honestly do not know how I would have made it through my time in school. He was there for me even when I didn't want to be there for myself. He showed me that my voice matters and that I could always count on him for anything. Whether it was a friendly smile when I was down or a listening ear when I felt as though I had no one to turn to. The predicament he is in just goes to show that the "justice" system has failed again. We all love Mr. Ant and hope we can continue spreading his message while he's getting through this troubled time.

Denize Wells, Class of '18

Concern,

To whom it may

Anthony Smith is a dear friend who I met in college. We met during summer orientation, in the "Gateway to Success Program" at Arcadia. That was 10 years ago and I believe that the name of the program foreshadowed Anthony's (who we affectionately call Ant) future. Ant has been an amazing family member, friend, teacher, and community member throughout my 10 years of knowing him. He's reliable, compassionate, understanding, helpful, innovative, creative, and caring. He's a great person to all that he meets.

Ant has helped me launch numerous businesses with his creativity as my lead graphic designer. I am also a teacher and Ant is the first person I call when I would like to teach my students about being a social justice warrior. Even though Ant started his career as a graphic designer, I am proud that it's continuing as a community activist.

I see the joy that Ant has when he's teaching his students, giving away food to his community, assisting fellow community members in need of a listening ear, and helping underserved people understand their ability to achieve greatness. Ant has grown into a man who believes in his community and people. Ant's life has greatly impacted at least hundreds of people and if given the opportunity to come home, he will continue to do so.

Sincerely,

Ms. Daymeia Wimberley, M.Ed